

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for segmenting customers by promotion, said method  
5 comprising the steps of:
- a) segmenting each customer in a plurality of customers into a segment  
in a plurality of segments for each promotion in a plurality of promotions, such  
that for a promotion there is a corresponding set of segments, wherein each  
segment in said set of segments represents a first respective group of  
10 customers having a certain response to said promotion; and
- b) separating said plurality of customers into a plurality of meta-  
segments, wherein each meta-segment in said plurality of meta-segments  
represents a second respective group of customers having a certain response  
to all promotions in said plurality of promotions.  
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2. The method as recited in Claim 1 comprising the step of:  
specifying a number of meta-segments based on customer  
demographics, wherein said customer demographics define characteristics of  
said plurality of customers.  
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3. The method as recited in Claim 2 wherein said number of meta-  
segments is specified such that the maximum number of customers are  
represented by said meta-segments.
- 25 4. The method as recited in Claim 2 further comprising the step of:  
executing an algorithm for determining a number of customers in each  
meta-segment to receive a particular promotion.
5. The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said segmenting of said  
30 step a) is accomplished using a segmentation method selected from the group  
consisting of CART (Classification and Regression Tree), k-means, k-harmonic  
means and clustering.
6. The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said step b) comprises  
35 the step of:

associating with each customer a vector representing a combination of a segment and a promotion.

7. A method for segmenting customers by promotion, said method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving information for a customer describing said customer's response to each promotion in a plurality of promotions;

b) segmenting said customer into a segment for said each promotion, wherein for each promotion there is a corresponding set of segments, wherein each segment in said set of segments represents a first respective group of customers having a certain response to said promotion; and

c) placing said customer into a meta-segment in a plurality of meta-segments, wherein said meta-segment represents a second respective group of customers having a certain response to all promotions in said plurality of promotions.

8. The method as recited in Claim 7 further comprising the step of: selecting a subset of said meta-segments based on customer demographics, wherein said subset is limited to a specified number of meta-segments and wherein said customer demographics define characteristics of said plurality of customers.

9. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said subset of meta-segments is selected such that said specified number of meta-segments represents the maximum number of customers.

10. The method as recited in Claim 8 further comprising the step of: determining a particular promotion to be provided to said customer.

11. The method as recited in Claim 7 wherein said segmenting of said step b) is accomplished using a segmentation method selected from the group consisting of CART (Classification and Regression Tree), k-means, k-harmonic means and clustering.

12. The method as recited in Claim 7 wherein said step c) comprises the step of:

associating with said customer a vector representing a combination of a segment and a promotion.

13. A method for segmenting customers by promotion, said method comprising the steps of:

a) recording information characterizing a response from each customer in a plurality of customers to each promotion in a plurality of promotions; and

b) separating said plurality of customers into a plurality of meta-segments, wherein each meta-segment in said plurality of meta-segments represents a respective group of customers having a certain response to all promotions in said plurality of promotions.

14. The method as recited in Claim 13 wherein said step a) further comprises the step of:

a1) segmenting each customer in said plurality of customers into a segment in a plurality of segments for each promotion in said plurality of promotions, such that for a promotion there is a corresponding set of segments, wherein each segment in said set of segments represents a respective group of customers having a certain response to said promotion.

15. The method as recited in Claim 14 wherein said segmenting of said step a1) is accomplished using a segmentation method selected from the group consisting of CART (Classification and Regression Tree), k-means, k-harmonic means and clustering.

16. The method as recited in Claim 14 wherein said step a1) further comprises the step of:  
associating with each customer a vector representing a combination of a segment and a promotion.

17. The method as recited in Claim 14 further comprising the step of:  
specifying a number of meta-segments based on customer demographics, wherein said customer demographics define characteristics of said plurality of customers.

18. The method as recited in Claim 17 wherein said number of meta-segments is specified such that the maximum number of customers are represented by said meta-segments.

- 5      19. The method as recited in Claim 17 further comprising the step of:  
executing an algorithm for determining a number of customers in each  
meta-segment to receive a particular promotion.